



**A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING ANXIETY FOR  
INDONESIAN STUDENTS STUDYING OVERSEAS**

***SKRIPSI***

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## ABSTRACT

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Studying abroad provides students with an excellent opportunity to broaden their perspectives, enhance their understanding of different cultures, and gain invaluable life experience. Learning a language is an important component of international education as it helps students adjust to new situations and participate in their social activities. However, learning in a new environment with an unfamiliar language often causes anxiety. This anxiety can be in the form of fear of making mistakes, anxiety about public speaking, or worry about language skills. The impact of language learning anxiety not only occurs in the classroom but also affects students' overall well-being, academic performance, and social integration. Therefore, the main reason why the researcher wanted to research the topic was to find out why language learning anxiety is common among students studying abroad.

Using a narrative inquiry approach, this study aims to explore and understand the stories of Indonesian students studying abroad regarding their language learning anxiety experiences while in an academic environment abroad, identify what factors can contribute to reducing anxiety levels among students, and also identify what strategies or efforts students make to overcome anxiety in learning a foreign language. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using a grounded theory coding scheme. To collect narrative data, the researcher conducted multiple interviews using Zoom in two meetings, and each interview meeting took approximately 30 minutes.

The findings of this study reveal that language learning anxiety has a significant influence on students' language learning process while studying abroad. The main sources of anxiety include the lecturer's inconsistent use of language, fear of making mistakes, and difficulty communicating. This anxiety hinders comprehension, presentation, and writing tasks, and leads to overthinking, reduced motivation, and social interaction, ultimately affecting confidence and academic performance. However, this can be mitigated through a supportive social environment, a good university role, and technology that supports learning. Furthermore, effective strategies to manage anxiety include incorporating appropriate learning methods, continuous learning, and support from self and others, which is essential in managing and reducing language learning anxiety.



Based on the research findings, the teachers, lecturers, or universities could create a supportive environment where students feel comfortable participating in discussions without fear of making mistakes, providing feedback or motivation to students that can help them improve their language skills and build their confidence. Likewise, students can use personalized learning strategies that suit individual learning styles and preferences, practice with native speakers, increase vocabulary acquisition to improve comprehension, and utilize language-based technology to improve language skills and reduce anxiety. Exploration and investigation into the causes of anxiety, other factors, and coping strategies can be further explored in other studies by future researchers.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses several subjects related to the introduction of this study. These include background knowledge, research problems, study objectives, research significance, the study's scope and limitations and the definition of key terms.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Studying overseas offers students a fantastic chance to extend their perspectives, enhance their comprehension of different cultures, and acquire invaluable life experiences. Learning a language is the most crucial component of an international education for students studying abroad. According to Furotun et al. (2023), language is more than simply a body of words; it is something that may bind a person to their ancestry, way of life, beliefs, and knowledge. In the modern world, an increasing number of Indonesian students are looking to study abroad for both higher education and cultural exchange experiences. Most people view English as essential to getting a better job in the era of globalization (Hidayanti & Azami, 2023). The development of a new generation that can use information obtained from a wide range of nations for the nation's advancement might have a good effect on the people of Indonesia. Historians and policymakers generally agree that foreign education experiences have a transformative impact on students,

helping them move from being language learners to multilingual users and improving their international orientation and openness to different cultures (Mitchell et al., 2020). In this context, language acquisition is crucial because it helps pupils adjust to new situations and participate successfully in social, intellectual, and everyday activities.

However, in the process of learning in a new environment and using a language that may not be fully mastered, there is often a sense of anxiety that cannot be avoided. For learners studying abroad, language learning anxiety is often a challenge that needs to be faced with determination and perseverance. It refers to the feelings of worry or nervousness that learners experience when engaged in language learning activities (Horwitz et al., 1986). Language anxiety plays a vital role among the many factors that affect language learning progress (Saleh et al., 2021). Throughout the process of learning a language, a lot of English language learners encounter anxiety. Anxiety plays a crucial part in language learning, even though each foreign language student experiences emotions to varying degrees (Sorguli et al., 2021). These feelings can manifest in various forms, such as fear of making mistakes, public speaking anxiety, or concerns about language ability.

The impact of language learning anxiety not only occurs in the classroom but also affects students' overall well-being, academic performance, and social integration. Wang (1998) states that studies on the crippling effects of worry on language acquisition repeatedly demonstrate that anxiety is a significant predictor of L2 acquisition and that it can have a detrimental impact on the performance and



achievement of foreign language learners. According to Gkonou et al. (2017), anxiety can also make it challenging to learn the target language and hinder academic success, exhibit negative attitudes toward the target language and its culture, foster self-doubt, affect identity construction, and threaten self-esteem. According to the explanation, a learner's motivation, output, and overall language learning experience can all be strongly impacted by anxiety related to language acquisition.

Therefore, the main reason why the researcher wanted to research the topic was to find out why language learning anxiety is common among students studying abroad. Similarly, the study by Ali and Anwar (2021) examine the number of students who experience anxiety when learning a language, which can affect their language learning achievement. Not only that, a new language's learning environment, which includes interactions with classmates from diverse cultural backgrounds, varying learning styles, and disparities in educational systems, can exacerbate anxiety brought on by uncertainty and a fear of failing. Also, there is pressure on students to speak the newly acquired language fluently. They dread making errors or finding it difficult to engage with locals, and they worry about their capacity to comprehend and communicate messages effectively. This might hinder language learners' progress by causing them to feel uneasy and nervous while writing or speaking in a foreign language.

From this explanation, this study dealt with the students who study overseas in non-English speaking countries (Taiwan) to analyze the students' stories or experiences in dealing with anxiety in mastering a foreign language and how

much such anxiety can affect the language learning process. This study also identifies what factors can contribute, such as cultural, social, or educational, to reducing anxiety levels among students and also identifies what strategies or efforts students make to overcome anxiety in learning a foreign language.

Thus, using a narrative inquiry approach, this study aims to explore and understand the stories of Indonesian students studying abroad regarding their experiences of language learning anxiety while in an academic environment abroad, collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using narrative analysis. This is the case in Abrar (2019) research, which also uses narrative inquiry to understand in depth and detail the stories of International Indonesian Graduate Students (IIGS) regarding their speaking experiences in an academic environment.

Many studies discuss language learning anxiety for students studying overseas; for example, according to Wang (1998), the purpose of this study was to examine the association between students' perceptions of language acquisition and foreign language anxiety among university students in mainland China who are studying English as a foreign language (EFL). Ali and Anwar (2021), the purpose of this study is to examine the factors that affect students' anxiety levels while studying at private colleges in Erbil to learn a language. Abrar (2019), the purpose of this study is to investigate and interpret the accounts of Indonesian graduate students' speaking experiences in academic settings while studying at a university in the United Kingdom. It also aims to comprehend the speaking obstacles these students face and develop solutions for them, both inside the classroom and in



university environments. Thompson and Lee (2014), stated that the purpose of the study is to look at how anxiety in foreign language classes is affected by experience abroad and learning a second language. Wang (2009), this study investigated English as a foreign language (EFL) at Taiwanese universities, the anxiety experienced by students participating in short-term study abroad programs, the causes of anxiety, the ways in which anxiety impacts students' learning of the English language overseas, and the student's perceptions of the influence of their study abroad (SA) experience on their anxiety and future English language learning. In addition to abroad, international students learning English in Indonesia also experience anxiety in the learning process. Zakiya et al. (2022), this study investigated five Thai international students' experiences with anxiety during English language acquisition and usage in Indonesia.

From these previous studies, the researcher wants to develop existing theories and research related to the topic of this study, namely language learning anxiety for international students. However, some differences arise from previous studies, this study focuses more on analyzing students' stories or experiences in facing anxiety in mastering a foreign language while abroad and how much anxiety can affect the language learning process. In the study, we can also identify strategies or efforts made by students to overcome anxiety in learning a foreign language by using more than two instruments and using more subjects to be interviewed with multiple interviews to achieve more valid data.

## 1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the anxieties in mastering a foreign language while abroad, and how much can these anxieties affect their language learning process?
2. What contextual factors, such as cultural, social, and educational influences, contribute to the development and intensification of language learning anxiety among Indonesian students studying abroad?
3. How do Indonesian students cope with language learning anxiety while studying abroad, and what strategies do they employ to manage or overcome it?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

From these three research questions, we can outline the purpose and focus of this study.

1. To describe the anxieties that Indonesian students encounter when learning a foreign language while studying abroad and to assess the extent to which these anxieties impact their language learning process. This research aims to provide insights into the psychological and emotional factors that influence language acquisition among these students.
2. To explore contextual factors that contribute to the development and intensification of language learning anxiety among Indonesian students studying abroad. These factors include cultural, social, and educational influences. Understanding these factors can help develop a more comprehensive view of the issues faced by these students.

3. To investigate how Indonesian students cope with language learning anxiety while studying abroad and what strategies they employ to manage or overcome these anxieties. This part of the study aims to provide practical insights and recommendations for educators and institutions to support students in their language learning journeys.

#### **1.4 Significances of the Study**

##### **1. Theoretical**

This research can contribute to our understanding of the anxieties in foreign language learning, especially in the context of studying abroad. It can help refine existing theories of language acquisition and provide insights into interesting aspects of language learning anxiety in cross-cultural contexts by investigating the contextual (social and cultural) factors that increase language learning anxiety among Indonesian students abroad. This information can be crucial in understanding how cultural adaptation and social integration play a role in language learning. Manipuspika (2018), this study also suggests future research directions to address the issue of anxiety in second language learning, potentially leading to improved teaching strategies and support systems for Indonesian students studying abroad.

##### **2. Practical**

The findings from this study can inform the development of language education policies and programs for Indonesian students studying abroad.

Educational institutions and government agencies can use this information to develop more effective teaching strategies and support systems for Indonesian students studying abroad. This could include language improvement programs, counseling services, and cultural orientation to ease the adaptation process.

Universities and organizations that support international students can use the insights into language learning anxiety provided by this research to create a more inclusive, welcoming, and supportive environment for effective language acquisition while reducing stressors for Indonesian students so that they can overcome language learning anxiety among Indonesian students and potentially improve their academic and social experiences while studying abroad.

### **1.5 Definition of Key Terms**

#### **1. Narrative Inquiry**

A qualitative research approach called "narrative inquiry" centers on the gathering and examination of individual narratives in order to explore human experience. This narrative data is collected through interviews, diaries, or through participant observation. This approach focuses more on exploring the life experiences or personal stories of individuals through storytelling and seeks to understand the stories told with more depth and meaningful.

#### **2. Foreign Language Learning**

Foreign language learning is the process of acquiring proficiency in a language that is not one's mother tongue or native language. It involves mastery in

listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Typically, foreign language learning occurs in formal educational settings, but it can also take place in informal settings, in-depth programs, or self-study. The goal is to improve communication in international contexts and a more effective understanding of foreign language learning.

### **3. Anxiety**

Anxiety is an emotion to deal with potential threats that may occur in the future. It is characterized by worried thoughts, feelings of tension, discomfort, or nervousness, such as pacing and brooding, that can be caused by a variety of factors, including when in new or stressful situations. While anxiety is normal in life and can even be motivating in certain situations, excessive or persistent anxiety can affect success rates in the learning process and can interfere with daily functioning.

### **4. Students Studying Overseas**

Students who study overseas refer to individuals who continue their education in a country different from their home country. It is common for students to enter various academic programs either on their own or through government-supported programs, including student exchange programs or scholarship programs, including undergraduate, graduate, or postgraduate programs. Studying abroad also often gives students the opportunity to experience new things, such as different cultures, education systems, and environments.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

After describing the narrative and discussion in the previous chapter, this research is closed with research conclusions and suggestions based on the findings.

#### 5.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that language learning anxiety has a significant effect on students' language learning process while studying abroad. The main sources of anxiety include inconsistent language use by lecturers, fear of making mistakes, and difficulty in communicating. This anxiety inhibits comprehension, presentation, and writing tasks, leading to overthinking, reduced motivation, and social interaction, ultimately affecting confidence and academic performance. Then, this can, however, be mitigated through a supportive social environment, including encouragement from classmates, study buddies, and roommates, which is crucial in reducing anxiety and increasing confidence, while criticism exacerbates it. Universities can help monitor and provide assistance for student well-being. In addition, language-based technologies help facilitate access to information and improve language skills, thereby reducing anxiety. Furthermore, effective strategies to manage anxiety include using adapted learning techniques such as reading, writing, summarizing,



repeating, practicing with native speakers, and adapting to friends and lecturers. Building self-connection, having a supportive social network, sharing stories, mastering vocabulary, and taking risks without fear of failure is also important. Overall, combining the proper learning methods, continuous learning, and support from yourself and others is essential in managing and reducing language learning anxiety.

## **5.2 Suggestions**

Referring to the research findings on what students feel when they experience anxiety, why they feel anxious, what factors influence anxiety, and what strategies are applied to overcome their anxiety, the researcher would like to make some suggestions:

### **5.2.1 For Lecturers**

Recognizing that anxiety is a significant cause affecting students' performance in the language learning process, lecturers or teachers should use English consistently during lectures to avoid confusion and comprehension difficulties among international classes, speak clearly and at a moderate pace to help students understand the material effectively, create a supportive environment where students feel comfortable participating in discussions without fear of making mistakes, provide feedback or motivation to students to help them improve their language skills and build their confidence by sharing personal experiences and providing practical strategies to overcome their anxiety and adapt appropriate teaching methods to meet their needs better.

### 5.2.2 For Students

To learn a language while abroad, students are expected to find support from classmates, study buddies, and roommates to create a supportive social network that fosters their motivation and confidence and communicate openly with peers, lecturers, and universities regarding difficulties or anxiety encountered during the learning process. Other suggestions include self-reflection, daring to try new things, and not being afraid to fail to build resilience and confidence in managing language learning anxiety. Using personalized learning strategies that suit individual learning styles and preferences, such as reading, writing, summarizing, practicing with native speakers, and increasing vocabulary acquisition to improve comprehension and find the best techniques, and utilizing language-based technologies such as online learning platforms, translator apps and social media to obtain information quickly, improve language skills, and reduce anxiety.

### 5.2.3 For Future Researchers

Given this study's limitations, further investigation is needed to explore students' anxiety about the language learning process while abroad. The researcher also believes that this study can be helpful in the future, as a reference for future researchers conducting research that has the same case as this study. Other researchers are also expected to develop this research further to make it even better.

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